

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

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EDITOR

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Few men do as well as they might do; to say nothing of doing as well as they think they should do.—E. W. Howe.

THE ROAD IMPROVEMENT DECISION.

Judge Stuart's decision in the road improvement case upholds the principle of the local assessment plan, and in an unofficial statement he emphasizes the inherent propriety of this plan; and yet his decision is likely to be a deterrent instead of an encouragement to the formation of local improvement districts.

The circuit judge holds, in brief, that the work under dispute in three cases was repair work and not "original construction." Now repair work may be done from the city's general fund, whereas under the law of the last legislature, original construction must be done under the local improvement statutes, that is, partly or wholly at the expense of abutting property.

The feeling of the citizens who brought the suit for injunction was that in these three pieces of road-work the improvement had gone far beyond repairs and had become original construction. They felt that the local improvement statutes should have become operative as to these stretches of highway. Regardless of the outcome of the cases in the lower court, they still feel so.

The feeling that the city is doing material road construction out of the general fund, upheld by the court's opinion, will deter neighborhoods from forming local improvement districts. Such neighborhoods will see work done elsewhere on a scale that appears to be original construction, and yet under the court's opinion is held to be repair work and it would be beyond human nature to expect these neighborhoods then to ask that they themselves be assessed under the frontage-tax statutes for the improvement of their own streets.

To put it briefly and concretely, Manoa residents will take this position: If the court holds that such work as that on Queen street was legally done as repair work and paid for out of the general fund, Manoa is entitled to the same sort of "repair work" and there is no necessity of paying for it under the frontage-tax plan.

And this decision means, if it means anything, that the city should undertake at once a vast scheme of repair work on road after road and highway after highway, for certainly they need improvement.

Judge Stuart's opinion in closing says:

"Necessarily much must be left to the discretion of the municipal authorities. A dozen or more men well acquainted with the matter in hand pass upon the question and adjudicate it as they think it should be adjudicated. Now it seems to me that it would be quite presumptuous on the part of the court to undertake to overrule this rightful exercise of authority simply because he honestly differed with them in opinion, and I do not find anything in the law that justifies such an action on the part of the court. . . . I think the injunction should be denied, even if I thought that the city authorities were mistaken in their conclusion as to the necessities of the case or the proper mode of proceeding, so long as they exercise the discretion that is given them by the law."

The first court interpretation of the local improvement statutes thus places in the discretion of the board the application or non-application of the statutes virtually without limitation. But since the case is to be appealed to the supreme court, a further discussion of it there may serve to guide the tax-payers of the city, who are now wholly at sea. Certainly tax-payers will be dissatisfied with laws which give to the supervisors and city engineer such apparently limitless authority in determining whether improvements are to be done under the general fund or assessed against abutting property.

WHAT OF 1916?

The world-war has so overshadowed American politics that little attention has been paid to the preparations of Republican and Democratic national parties for the big campaigns next year.

At this distance from mainland activities, it looks as if the Progressives will have little more than a paper organization in 1916—that is, unless the Republican reactionaries should insist on nominating for president some man so inefficient or unpopular that there would be a revolt of the rank and file. In that case, the Progressives would doubtless flock by themselves again and split the G. O. P. in another hopeless situation.

No one who has followed mainland politics in the past year can have failed to notice the steady drift of prominent Progressives back to the Republican fold. Col. Roosevelt's lieutenants in state after state are declaring that they

can do more good by entering the Republican primaries than by continuing their independent cause. In New York such men as Theodore Douglas Robinson—nephew of T. R.—Frederick M. Davenport, erstwhile Bull Moose candidate for governor; Chauncey Hamlin of Buffalo, who controls the Erie county organizations, and many others, have announced their intention of rejoining the Republicans.

Col. Roosevelt himself has taken a kindly attitude toward the deserters. He says:

As regards the Progressives who have announced their intention of enrolling as Republicans in this state, I have nothing to say except that I think it has been fine of them to have made the great fight they have made during the past three years for Progressive principles, and I am sure they are acting conscientiously in the step they now take and with the purpose of doing what they regard as most useful to the community.

Holding the convictions I do it would be an impossibility for me myself to take that step. I shall enroll as a Progressive, and if any man in this state asks my advice I shall advise him also to enroll as a Progressive.

A great many papers of all political faiths believe that Roosevelt's leniency toward those who quit his party is due to the fact that he himself expects to support a Republican for president if one emerges whom he can support with any degree of consistency. Others think that Roosevelt is waiting for the Republican leaders to make him some overtures.

In San Francisco recently the Colonel was asked as to his candidate for president and he indicated that Governor Johnson is the man. However, Johnson is not conceded any chance of election whatever.

William Allen White, the Kansas editor, intimates that the party should stay in existence in the hope that two or four or eight years from now American sentiment will turn toward the Progressive program of social justice.

But the great body of Progressives who followed Roosevelt out of the Chicago convention and its party lines are back in the Republican party again, it would seem. Certainly the various state elections showed that the Progressive organization is but a shadow of its former self. If the Republicans should nominate such a man as Borah, or Root, or Hughes, the Progressives would have little opportunity for another grand revolt. Of course their radicals hate Root because of his connection with the Chicago convention, but Root's pre-eminent ability and the feeling that he would be a master in handling international relations would probably constitute greater sources of strength than his 1912 affiliations constitute sources of weakness.

Incidentally, it is very interesting to note the drift of sentiment toward Justice Hughes. Progressives in New York have already mentioned him as a man they could support. If the reactionaries who are still strong in national Republicanism will stand aside, Hughes might be secured as the standard-bearer. And, say the old campaigners, Hughes could "give Wilson a battle."

Gen. Polivanoff, the new Russian war minister, is talking of raising a new army of 2,000,000 men by spring. Probably he will have no difficulty doing that but if he can arm these two million he will be accomplishing wonders. Russia has been getting ready for war ever since 1905 and still when her millions were mobilized last spring there was a painful shortage of infantry munitions and equipment. When one of the Russian forts fell a few days ago survivors said that 15,000 of the defenders had been fighting without arms. And an American war correspondent recently wrote of a series of battles in which the Russians, retreating doggedly before the splendidly-equipped Germans, had nothing but stout cudgels as weapons. The usual Russian incompetence, graft and carelessness in governmental circles is apparently not lacking in this war.

We should say that when two policemen engage in a fight in front of the police station—one having arrested the other for joy-riding—there is material furnished for a civil service commission investigation.

Germany's submarine feats aren't hailed with nearly as much Teutonic rejoicing as they were a few months ago.

Uncle Sam can't very well turn the other cheek because that's already been walloped.

Nothing has been heard about Japan supplying munitions to China.

War prophets are beginning to fight shy of telling when it's going to end.

Kitchener's spring drive, of course, might be in the spring of 1916.

LETTERS

(The Star-Bulletin invites free and frank discussion in this column on all legitimate subjects of current interest. Communications are constantly received to which no signature is attached. This paper will treat as confidential signatures of letters if the writers so desire, but cannot give space for anonymous communications.)

THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Editor Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
Sir: Two thousand miles from mainland book stores and 5000 miles from a big publishing center, so that it takes six weeks to place a book order, Honolulu is in pressing need of such enlargements of its library as will make it a satisfactory place for reference work and give it a fairly complete stock of literature of all kinds.

The library of Hawaii has been under the new regime for only two years and under the direction of a capable force it is making long steps in the right direction, but it cannot reach a reputable standard soon enough unless it receives a large appropriation with which to lay in a stock of sorely needed volumes. The government should vote a large sum to be at once invested according to the direction of the library's book committee.

Owing to the inadequacy of the present stock anyone in this city attempting the most elementary research will find himself working under a great handicap for the simple reason that he has access to no primary sources. To send to the mainland for books is a process at once slow and expensive and requires a deal of foresight and a very elastic pocketbook, yet the taxpayers of Honolulu have been reduced by the inefficiency of the territorial library to the necessity of building up their private book collections and often to the purchase of books of the most temporary value.

At a period when most people think in quotation marks and try to condense the world into a bookcase rather than go out to learn of it for themselves, the importance of excellent libraries cannot be overestimated in any place, but in the case of Hawaii its isolation renders such a need imperative.

At the present time the Library of Hawaii has reached the same rank as the town library of some interior village in the states. It has an excellent range of reading material of a general nature. It can furnish a great deal of amusing printed matter, but very little that will encourage serious study or stimulate thought. This is partly attributed to the fact that it has not yet recovered from the time when it was a subscription library; partly to the fact that the demands of the rank and file of the reading public are catered to. In a word, the library is in danger of being built up according to the desires of children and "tired businessmen."

By all means let the children have their fairy tales and their romances, their Sinbad, the Uncas and their Long John Silver, and let the other desperadoes who ever sailed through the glorious pages of Stevenson or the Arabian Nights; but the "tired businessman" and his equally tired wife come under a different category. Let the man who has exhausted his capacity for thought by squabbling over a phone or yelling at a stenographer, and his wife, who is equally weary by balancing a teacup the while she registers epigrams on her neighbor's gown, buy their own books. It is a crime for a public institution to furnish them free material for their intellectual debauches. Those who believe the sins of intemperance are confined to such abuse of the body as over-indulgence in liquor are pitifully mistaken. There are mental intoxications far more injurious, and one who values the health of the mind as well as the health of the stomach will esteem people who habitually indulge in R. W. Chambers or the esteemed Gouverneur Morris to be better than drunkards. Unfortunately the moral standards seem to be perfectly filled by people with clean stomachs and empty heads, and there is no condemnation due for those who read authors who at their best can do no more than produce miserable caricatures of human nature and at their worst fill the mind of the reader with filthy insinuation.

But in spite of these facts the wishes of the "tired businessman and wife" largely determine the nature of the books which are kept in the library. A few statistics prove this eloquently. The volumes of philosophy purchased in the last year were 54, of religion 70, of literature (under which anomalous title are gathered poetry and drama and kindred works, in other words the finest products of man's imagination) 319, but of fiction no less than 1225, a remarkable record indeed.

And even in fiction there are further interesting facts to note. We discover with surprise some 15 volumes of the esteemed R. W. Chambers, while the brilliant Theophile Gautier is accorded two volumes of

Personal Mention

JAMES THOMPSON, clerk of the supreme court, who has been spending the last two weeks on windward Oahu, will return to Honolulu on September 7.

ALFRED AMANA, who was graduated from the McKinley high school in June, will leave for the mainland in the steamer Korea tomorrow to enter the University of Illinois.

DR. AND MRS. THOMAS J. WEST and family of Makaweli, Kauai, are stopping at the Young Hotel, and will leave for the mainland tomorrow on the Korea, for a three months' visit to Cleveland, Ohio, and other points.

MISS ESTHER LEE TOMA, daughter of Lee Toma of this city, who has been spending the summer in Honolulu, will return to the mainland in the Korea tomorrow to resume her studies at the University of Illinois.

JEFF McCARN, U. S. district attorney, is expected to return to Honolulu in the steamer Wilhelmna tomorrow. He will be accompanied by Customs Inspector Joseph Heads and Surveyor of Port Waddell of San Francisco.

CHARLES R. FORBES, superintendent of public works and chairman of the public utilities commission, and Henry P. O'Sullivan, secretary of the commission, will leave for Hilo in the Wilhelmna next Thursday. They will make an investigation of the Hilo telephone rates.

JUDGE SANFORD B. DOLE, who has been holding a special session of the local federal court in Hilo, will return to Honolulu in the Mauna Kea tomorrow morning. Among other arrivals from the Big Island will be Mrs. Dole, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Breckons, Miss Breckons and Foster Davis, deputy federal court clerk.

JOHN B. THOMPSON, who, until recently, was in charge of the federal experiment station at Guam, has gone to Hawaii to take the position of superintendent of the experiment station at Glenwood. He will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Fred A. Clowes, now agriculturist at the Lahainauna school, Maui.

GEORGE A. BELAYEFF, a wholesale produce dealer of San Francisco, is a visitor in Honolulu and expects to remain in the islands for several weeks. He called on A. T. Longley, superintendent of the territorial marketing division, today, and said that, in his opinion, there is an excellent market on the mainland for fresh Hawaiian pineapples. Mr. Belayeff, however, is not interested in pineapples; he deals largely in potatoes and onions.

LITTLE INTERVIEWS

—JUDGE HENRY E. COOPER: I'm off to the mainland tomorrow and when I return to Honolulu in six weeks I expect to be chock full of ideas for Mid-Pacific Carnival features.

—CIRCUIT JUDGE ASHFORD: From now on we are going to be pretty busy in the criminal division of the circuit court. All the trial jurors should be in court promptly at 9 o'clock next Wednesday morning.

—WALTER F. FREAR: The special committee of the Research Club

fragments, by no means his best. The creator of Sherlock Holmes, a feeble imitation of Poe's Dupin, has shelf-space for 22 volumes, while the great critic Sainte-Beuve is allotted two books. Jack London, who wrote one good book, "The Call of the Wild," and swells the list of absurdities with 20 contributions, while Prosper Merimee read authors who at their best can do no more than produce miserable caricatures of human nature and at their worst fill the mind of the reader with filthy insinuation.

And the same state of affairs seems to continue throughout the list. In history we find no copy of Bury's edition of Gibbon, nor any sign of Ranke's Welt Geschichte, nor any trace of Dio Cassius or Diodorus Siculus, or even of the masterly Polybius. And how shall the student of Greek history proceed when he finds no copy of Conon Thirlwall, Bury, Duruy, Beloch, Meyer or even Busolt with his indispensable comparative notes. But it is useless to pile up further examples. This is indicative of the state of the whole. We can merely call the attention of the public and wait for the government to act.

GOOD LITERATURE.

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is hard at work on a model city charter for Honolulu. The committee expects to complete its work in about a week.

—CLINTON A. PEDRICK: The new oil dressing on our city streets is costing automobile owners an average of \$5 per machine. The oil is very destructive to rubber. Eleven thousand dollars into the pockets of the tire-

merchants is a fat thing. A liberal use of gravel over the oil would have saved this. But the dealers in tires say, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

Smythe—He made a living by going from bad to worse. Smythe—How could he do that? Smythe—He was a doctor.

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2548 Rooke St., Punahoa	4 bedrooms	75.00

UNFURNISHED

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Royal Grove	2 bedrooms	37.50
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12th and Mauna Loa Aves., Kaimuki	2 bedrooms	15.00
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1004 W. 5th Ave., Kaimuki	4 bedrooms	16.00
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1056 14th Ave., Kaimuki	3 bedrooms	25.00
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